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Viewing cable 09SKOPJE538, MACEDONIA: DUI LEADER AHMETI OPPOSES NAME ISSUE

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09SKOPJE538**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09SKOPJE538	2009-11-09 18:32	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Skopje

Appears in these articles:

<http://wcentral.org/node/1826>

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SKOPJE 000538

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/04/2014

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SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: DUI LEADER AHMETI OPPOSES NAME ISSUE

REFERENDUM, WOULD BOYCOTT EARLY ELECTIONS

REF: A. SKOPJE 525

[1](#)B. SKOPJE 356

Classified By: AMBASSADOR PHILIP REEKER FOR REASONS 1.5 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: During meetings on October 26 and November 1, ethnic-Albanian coalition party leader Ali Ahmeti and Ambassador Reeker discussed PM Nikola Gruevski's recent trip to Brussels and his meeting with new Greek PM Papandreou. Ahmeti noted that the PM seemed to have a renewed openness to solving the name issue but was still hung up on the same obstacles. Ahmeti generally opposed the idea of a referendum on the name issue but insisted that if necessary, the language of any proposed referendum must have broad support. Ahmeti again declared that his party and ethnic Macedonian opposition party SDSM had agreed to boycott early parliamentary elections should they be called. He also said that the parliamentary group investigating the Sopot case would ask for the case to be retried and believed his party and VMRO-DPMNE were close to agreeing on a social package for the former NLA fighters. (End Summary)

¶2. (C) Ahmeti positively noted PM Gruevski's apparently renewed determination to address the name dispute with Greece following the PM's recent trip to Brussels and October 29 meeting with new Greek PM George Papandreou (ref a). However, added Ahmeti, PM Gruevski is still hung up on the same obstacles regarding identity, geographical identifiers, and bilateral versus multilateral use of the name. Ahmeti also feels the PM's insistence on a referendum is unnecessary and stems from the PM's fear of his own (ethnic Macedonian) constituency. Ahmeti believes the PM does not have the courage to lead Macedonia to a resolution of the name issue without first establishing public consent through a referendum. However, if a referendum were proposed, Ahmeti indicated that his party would only be willing to support it if the language of the referendum received broad approval from all the major political parties in parliament.

¶3. (C) According to Ahmeti, former PM and President and current opposition party leader, Branko Crvenkovski, claimed to have reliable information that early parliamentary elections were being planned and asked Ahmeti if those rumors were true. Ahmeti said the owner of the Al media outlet, Velija Ramkovski, was Crvenkovski's source and Ahmeti did not consider him reliable. Ahmeti indicated that he was not aware of any plans for early elections, pointing out that elections would not make sense given the GoM's lack of achievements thus far. Without resolution of the name issue, tangible Euro-Atlantic accession progress and a continued lack of implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the government had nothing to campaign on. Ahmeti-- reiterating declarations from a previous meeting (ref b)-- said that he and Crvenkovski had agreed that their parties would boycott early elections. If Macedonia solved the name issue and got into NATO, Ahmeti joked that he would call for early elections himself. Ahmeti also pointed out that Crvenkovski's party was currently too weak for elections. (Comment: Gruevski has told Ambassador that he has no/no plans for early elections. End comment.)

¶4. (C) Ahmeti said the special parliamentary group investigating the Sopot case had experienced substantial difficulty obtaining information about the case from most of the government bodies from which it had requested information. (Background: the Sopot case was a controversial case in which eleven ethnic Albanians were convicted to a combined 156 years in prison, based primarily on the testimony of one witness (who later recanted), for allegedly planting a mine that killed two NATO soldiers and injured an interpreter in 2003.) Nonetheless, based on the limited information the parliamentary group had received, Ahmeti believed the group would ultimately determine that human rights violations were committed in the detention and questioning of the main witness and would request a retrial of the case. (Note- The court is under no obligation to submit to the recommendations of the parliamentary group.)

¶5. (C) Ahmeti believes the GoM is close to coming to terms on a social support package for the former National Liberation Army (NLA) fighters and their families. Ahmeti said the proposed package is within the terms of the May 29th

agreement-- which ended DUI's boycott of parliament in 2007-- and conforms to Macedonia's laws. Ahmeti said his party had prepared three variants of the social package and ultimately expected the version granting the lowest social support would be accepted, but DUI would be comfortable with that result. Ahmeti believed that his party had reached an understanding with the PM on the NLA social package and it would only be a matter of time until the package was passed into law. (Comment: The social package continues to play prominently in the press; it is not 100% clear that there is real agreement on the way forward. (End Comment))
REEKER